

**Mark Maddox**  
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76th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT  
Weakley and Carroll County

**House of Representatives**  
**State of Tennessee**

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January 19, 2007

Chairman Kevin Martin  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Room #8B-201  
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Safe Internet for Rural Communities

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As we begin the New Year, I believe it is a time for reflection of successes and challenges for my district and the state of Tennessee as a whole. Despite many gains in constituent opportunities and the economy, one missing fundamental component hindering many businesses and individuals is access to the Internet.

Our society is one functioning more every day by means of email and the Internet. For those people who live in areas where the population demand is not great enough to warrant expansion by Internet providers, there are no options for them to pursue broadband. In addition to being detrimental to the learning environment of students, this lack of access forces small business owners to forfeit the opportunity for online marketing, obliging them to pay for more expensive means of advertising or, even worse, forgo the opportunity all together. Advertising is a requisite to any successful business. If we want our small businesses to thrive (and we do), we must ensure that they are afforded all of the necessary resources, in this case, the Internet.

Citizens without broadband are falling further and further behind: underinformed, undereducated and, too often, unemployed. You can say that the schools have access to broadband — but if children leave school and cannot get their homework off the Internet at night, how will they keep up with the other children in the cities and in other countries?

Some say the U.S. ranks behind 11 countries in broadband subscribers per capita. The FCC says that when other factors are considered, we rank behind 20 countries. We are the greatest nation on earth — but 21st in the most important infrastructure since the interstate system. In the war for jobs, 20 countries are ahead of us.

It is my understanding that there is a proposal coming before your Commission to explore possibilities for free Internet access in Tennessee and across the nation. I encourage you to look closely at this prospect and think about what it could mean to every person struggling to attain this increasingly critical tool for success.

So, what are we waiting for?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mark Maddox". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Maddox" clearly distinguishable.

Mark Maddox  
State Representative

CC: FCC Commissioners: Copps, Adelstein, Tate, McDowell  
FCC Secretary Marlene Dortch  
Fred Campbell, Chief, Wireless Bureau  
Phil Bredesen, Governor of Tennessee  
Senator Alexander  
Senator Corker